

## Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 RANGOO 02894 191150Z

53

ACTION INR-07

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 ISO-00 EUR-12 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

ACDA-07 NEA-10 SAJ-01 /084 W  
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R 191000Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2167

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY

S E C R E T RANGOON 2894

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: XB, XP, UR, MPOL, BM

SUBJ: BURMESE PERCEPTIONS OF THE SOVIET MILITARY PRESENCE IN THE  
PACIFIC

REF: STATE 187556

1. NEITHER THE BURMESE GOVERNMENT NOR PUBLIC IS MEANINGFULLY  
AWARE OF A SOVIET NAVAL BUILD-UP, OR EVEN PRESENCE, IN THE  
PACIFIC OCEAN. THE ONLY PUBLIC MENTION OF THIS MATTER WAS  
A WIRE-SERVICE ACCOUNT OF THE RECENT ANZUS DELIBERATIONS  
AND STATEMENT IN THIS REGARD, WHICH WAS CARRIED IN THE LOCAL  
PRESS WITHOUT COMMENT. SO FAR AS WE CAN TELL, HOWEVER, THE  
BURMESE DO NOT RELATE PACIFIC OCEAN NAVAL AFFAIRS TO THEIR  
OWN SECURITY OR POLITICAL CONCERNS; AND CONSDQUENTLY THE  
STORY HAD NO REAL IMPACT.

2. THE BURMESE ARE UNDERSTANDABLY MORE AWARE OF, AND CON-  
CERNED ABOUT, INDIAN OCEAN NAVAL DEVELOPMENTS. HOWEVER,  
EVEN THESE DEVELOPMENTS ARE NOT CONSIDERED BY THE BURMESE  
TO HAVE HIGH PRIORITY IN RELATION TO THEIR OTHER, MORE

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 RANGOO 02894 191150Z

PRESSING SECURITY/POLITICAL AREAS OF INTEREST. THEY

WOULD LIKE TO BUILD KP THEIR NAVAL DEFENSES IF FINAN-  
CIALLY POSSIBLE, BUT THIS IS MOSTLY RELATED TO A DESIRE  
TO PREVENT SMUGGLING ACTIVITIES AND POACHING IN THEIR  
COSTAL FISHERIES.

3. WE DOUBT THAT THE BURMESE WILL EVER HAVE MUCH INTEREST  
IN PACIFIC OCEAN NAVAL AFFAIRS UNLESS SOME SORT OF GREAT  
POWER NAVAL CONFRONTATION DEVELOPS, WITH ATTENDANT WIDE-  
SPREAD PUBLICITY. EVEN THEN, THEY WOULD BE UNLIKELY TO  
SEE THE MATTER AS HAVING ANY IMPORTANT MEANING FOR THEM-  
SELVES, EXCEPT IN REINFORCING THE ARGUMENT FOR NEUTRALISM.

4. BURMESE PERCEPTIONS OF THE PRESENT AND POTENTIAL  
SOVIET ROLE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA FOCUS ON THE SINO-SOVIET  
RIVALRY. A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF SOVIET STRENGTH IS TACITLY  
WELCOMED AS A POSSIBLE DETERRENT TO FEARED CHINESE  
EXPANSIONIST TENDENCIES. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE BURMESE  
ARE DETERMINED TO MAINTAIN THEIR STRICT NEUTRALITY AND  
DO NOT WANT TO BECOME INVOLVED IN (OR CAUGHT THE  
MIDDLE OF) THE QUARREL. THEY ARE NOT WORRIED ABOUT  
SOVIET AGGRESSION AGAINST BURMA; AND BECAUSE THEIR LOCAL  
COMMUNIST INSURGENCY, THE BURMESE COMMUNIST PARTY, IS  
WHOLLY A CREATURE OF PEKING, THEY ARE NOT WORRIED ABOUT  
SOVIET SUPPORT FOR THE BCP. THEY HAVE DEMONSTRATED  
DISTINCT UNWILLINGNESS, HOWEVER, TO BE EMBRACED BY  
THE RUSSIAN BEAR: THEIR RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIETS,  
AS WITH US, ARE CORRECT BUT RATHER COOL, DISTANT, AND  
TO A DEGREE MISTRUSTFUL.  
OSBORN

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NNN

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